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A TRAIL OF LIGHT AROUND THE GLOBE

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A Trail of Light around the Globe

"THAT man is crazy," said America one hundred years ago, when young Adoniram Judson turned from a comfortable living and a brilliant career in his native land, and, with his bride, set his face toward distant, darkened Burma, there to give his life to a people who neither invited him to come nor wanted him to stay.

ADONIRAM JUDSON

"THAT man is a hero," says America today as it looks back over the century and realizes that the little spark, kindled in the heart of that young

minister, has become a veritable trail of light around the globe. Let us now, in this centennial year, take a little journey in the wake of this light and see where it leads, and what it will disclose.

THE natural starting point for such a pilgrimage must be Burma, the oldest and, in point of results, largest of our mission fields. Here, in this richest province of all India, are gathered forty different races, and twelve millions of people, with ten millions of Buddhists. Into this stronghold of heathenism, into the midst of this people, intolerant of all other religions, came, first Judson and then a long line of worthy successors bearing the light. It would take far too long to recount the discouragements they met, the obstacles they overcame and the patience with which they pursued their chosen labors. Let the results speak for them. Exclusive of the Burmans, among whom the work was begun, the efforts of the missionaries have been centered among eight races of which the Talains, Kachins, Karens, Shans and Chins are most important. Especially noteworthy has been the work among the Karens, a people unusually susceptible to the gospel, through their traditions of the flood, and of a God about whom they would some time learn from the white man. A mighty change has been brought about among these peoples within a century, — a revolution that has overturned things socially, politically and religiously. Heathenism is being undermined, idols are being deserted, and Buddha totters on his throne. The priests can no longer hold the people, who turn from them to the new leader as if drawn by a magnet.

WE find religious work in Burma carried on in thirty-two stations, by 191 missionaries and 2,483 native workers, whose efforts have resulted in 1,009

churches with a membership of nearly 66,000 and 614 Sunday schools with 25,000 pupils. Equally notable have been the results along educational lines. As a monument to the untiring efforts of our teachers, there are in Burma today 743 schools, including Rangoon Baptist College, two theological seminaries and forty-four boarding and high schools, enrolling a total of 28,626 pupils. Strong emphasis has been laid upon medical work and last year nine medical missionaries, in four good hospitals, made the bodies of over three thousand natives fit temples for the spirit to dwell in.

A VERY important work is being most acceptably done by the American Baptist Mission Press at Rangoon, which, under the efficient direction of Mr. F. D. Phinney, puts much inspiring literature into the hands of the natives.

TODAY the great problem in Burma is to reach the Chinese, who are coming to the country in vast numbers and are taking the industrial activities from the Burmans. It is evident that the future destiny of Burma depends upon reaching these Chinese immigrants.

BUT the trail of light leads us on to the northeast corner of India to Assam, the melting pot of the East, where six millions of people make known their thoughts in eighty different languages. Here, in the valleys, we find Hinduism with its rank idolatry, shocking immorality and hearty contempt for any new religion; while among the hills dwell the Animists, — the Garos, Rabhas, Nagas and others, who, with cruel rites and sacrifices, pay homage to malignant spirits of the air.

IT is here, among these hill tribes, that we see the greatest manifestations of the triumph of the gospel. Wonderful tales reach our ears of conversions from spirit-worship to the worship of the one true Spirit — tales of children transformed from filth and nakedness to cleanliness and respectability, their faces aglow with the glory of the new-found Saviour. Many are the instances that we see of shrines deserted, of altars broken down, and of prejudice and superstition vanishing like mist before the rising sun.

HERE in Assam the light reveals to us sixty-six missionaries and 404 native workers, laboring together in thirteen stations, while 13,000 Christians are worshiping in the 137 churches, and in 193 Sunday schools 7,200 scholars are learning the lessons from the lips of the teacher. Here, also, standing like beacons in the midst of ignorance and poverty are 234 schools, including seven boarding and high schools, and one training school, which for over 5,500 eager youths point the way to higher things. And industrial work among such a people as this is doing wonders. Medical missions are represented here by two hospitals in which nearly 13,000 diseased were treated last year. Truly a wonderful heritage is Assam, perhaps the most promising of all our mission fields.

BUT from South India gleams the light and to that point we go. In this region Hinduism with its rigid caste system, with its naked immorality, with its 330,000,000 gods, with its girl widows — has long reigned supreme. In the two neighboring fields, South India, embracing the work among the Telugus, and in Bengal-Orissa, conditions are very similar. Though caste has been a terrible obstacle, it shows signs of weakening and

many examples can be cited of ostracism for the sake of Christianity.

FROM the seed sown in this ground we are shown a sturdy growth. In twenty-nine South India stations, with a working force of 113 missionaries and 1,671 natives, the church has in twenty years increased ten times as fast as the population, the 147 churches today numbering a membership of nearly 67,000, while 16,000 receive instruction in the 592 Sunday schools. Many notable types of Christianity have been developed and a spirit of sacrifice is noticeable in the missionary work which many are conducting among their brothers in Africa. By friendly words and open attendance at the churches, many of the Brahmans are showing that Christ means more than caste.

THE great problem in South India has been that of self-support and this problem the 707 schools, high, industrial and secondary, with their enrolled membership of nearly 19,000 are helping to solve. To a people long afflicted with tropical diseases, medical aid is a great relief and last year 21,000 patients were treated in the five hospitals.

IN the Bengal-Orissa field with nine stations twenty-five missionaries and 396 native workers have established twenty-three churches with 1,621 members, and sixty-three Sunday schools with over 2,200 scholars. Two large institutions, a Bible school and a Boys' High School, and 162 smaller schools comprise the educational equipment. Although there are but three doctors and one hospital, over seven thousand patients were given relief last year.

BUT the trail now leads us across the border from India, to where the empire of the dragon lies in all its vastness, teeming with people, embracing within its confines one fourth the population of the globe. China is a nation proud of her traditions, fondly clinging to the iron-bound customs of a bygone age. Here, missionaries have come in contact with three great religions — Confucianism with its system of morals and ancestor worship; Buddhism, with its idolatrous practices, and Taoism, with its moral philosophy and spirit worship. To meet the contemptuous pride of the learned class; to overcome the falsehood and superstition of these three great religions, has been no easy task. In addition to this our missionaries were confronted with a rotten social system — a system where women were degraded, where child murder was not a crime and where opium had set its blight upon the home. Yet, the heart of the people was not at rest; they were searching for the peace which their religion did not give.

INTO such a field, then, came our missionaries, and, undaunted by the obstacles, they have never swerved from their purpose until today in twenty-one stations throughout the empire, 172 missionaries and 544 native workers are upholding the banner of the cross; while in 155 churches more than 6,300 members are enrolled and nearly 7,000 scholars gather weekly in the 159 Sunday schools. A thorough educational system is represented by three colleges, three academies, two girls' schools and a woman's Bible school, besides 170 lesser institutions, enrolling about 5,000 pupils. The China Baptist Publication Society at Shanghai gives valuable aid by its distribution of books and pamphlets. Last year the twenty-four medical missionaries on the field treated 23,000 patients in the ten hospitals.

WHAT missions has done for China, recent history tells; what missions will do for China, the Christians of the world must say. More doors are open than ever before; there is a chance for "the most momentous advance of Christianity since Paul crossed over into Macedonia." China is awake! She calls for workers. She listens for the message.

IN Japan, whence now shines the light, we learn that the planting of the cross has been attended with many difficulties as well as many encouragements. Here, in an area but little larger than that of California, are crowded fifty-one millions of people. The Japanese as a people are intelligent, but a very important trait is their apparent lack of any moral principle. Here, as in China, three great religions have long defied Christianity: Confucianism, Buddhism and Shintoism, the worship of heroes and departed emperors.

FROM the moment that Commodore Perry knocked at the barred gates of this island empire and demanded admittance in the name of a waiting world, until now, when 4,000 Baptist Christians are serving the Lord in thirty-three churches, our missionaries have been helping shape the ideals of this little nation. The work done here by the fifty-eight missionaries and 201 native workers shows true progress, for in addition to the churches, 196 Sunday schools have enrolled nearly 12,000 pupils. We learn of the change in the lives and character of the natives from a Japanese contractor who says, "The only men I can trust without watching are the men who have accepted the Jesus teaching."

JAPAN is the paradise of children, and kindergarten work is of great importance. Twenty-five schools of all grades, including the theological seminary, woman's

Bible school, home schools, academy and training schools are giving to 1,450 keen oriental minds the best of the learning of the Occident.

IN and out among the islands that make up the Japanese empire flits the little gospel ship, the "Fukuin Maru," with its consecrated captain, Luke W. Bickel, and its crew of native Christians, bearing the message to isolated ports that otherwise could never be reached. Thus on land and sea is the cross being lifted up.

DOWN deep in the heart of Africa, where we find humanity at its lowest stage, even there do we catch a gleam of the trail of the light. In the Congo, we find a people long crushed under the tyranny of a cruel king, a people almost without religion, delighting in every form of evil. Here fetishism holds sway, fetishism with its superstitious worship of an unknown power; with its cruel rites and bloody tortures of witch doctors.

YET today, a people who but a few years ago were brandishing bows and spears and shrieking war-whoops are carrying hymn books and singing the songs of the church. Today, where a few years ago were cannibalism, paganism and savagery, are twenty churches, with 4,500 members, forty-seven missionaries and 294 native workers. Where a few years ago were naked, savage children are today 104 Sunday schools with 6,000 pupils. Where were recently only dense ignorance and poverty are 175 schools, — boarding, high, industrial, and others, with 6,675 pupils, lifting a people used only to primitive methods of agriculture, out of degradation into lives of service. In a country where sleeping sickness and other tropical diseases claim their victims by the hundreds, and where the cruel

tortures of the witch doctor only aggravate the difficulties, the seven doctors and three hospitals are an inestimable boon.

BUT now a new gleam appears and we see, lying just at the door of Asia a little group of islands, the latest and one of the most promising of our mission fields. Here we find eight millions of little people who fifteen years ago had not a church, a decent school, or a doctor on their islands; in whose midst misery and dirt were appalling; where hookworm slew its thousands and malaria its tens of thousands annually. To these Philippines, following the Stars and Stripes, we see coming our missionaries. And what a welcome is theirs! Never before in the history of missions had there been found a people so eager to hear the gospel, so ready to receive its messengers. We see them coming from the east and from the west, crowding into the little chapel built to hold them, until the walls burst outward with the multitude.

AND notable results meet our eyes. The upper classes, at first disdainful, are becoming more and more friendly to the work, and as for the natives, searching the Scriptures is proving more fascinating to them than head-hunting, and the battlecry is succeeded by the Christian hymn. In two years the churches have increased in number sixty-seven per cent., now numbering fifty-one, while the membership of 3,800 is an increase of twenty-nine per cent. There are also forty-nine Sunday schools with 4,600 pupils, twenty-nine missionaries and 113 native workers. Mental development is provided for by eight schools of all kinds, with 1,700 enrolled. The Philippine Baptist Mission Press at Iloilo is doing much to get the printed page before the eyes of the native reader.

THE importance of medical missions cannot be overestimated, for oftentimes the conquest of the soul can be made only after the body has been healed. There are in the islands today two medical missionaries and in the two hospitals last year over 7,500 patients received the healing touch.

BUT there remains yet another field, a little different in the character of its work. In Europe, where Baptists are a weak and struggling body, often persecuted, money is appropriated and workers are sent to strengthen the weak. In Germany, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Russia and Finland good work is being done. Theological seminaries at Hamburg and in Sweden, and the Cassel Publishing House are important agencies in propagating Baptist principles in these countries. There are throughout Europe 1,182 churches, 2,483 preachers and over 139,000 church members.

THUS the trail of light has led around the globe, and a glorious trail it is. Our missions, eleven in number, comprise a total of 127 mission stations, with 701 missionaries and 6,106 native workers. We have forty-four lay missionaries, consisting of twenty doctors, thirteen teachers, four evangelists, six business men and a sea captain. As the result of a century of evangelization there are today in non-Christian lands 1,575 churches; in all foreign lands counting Europe, 2,757, with 305,600 church members enrolled, and a total number of over 585,000 baptisms. The Bible is being taught in 1,970 Sunday schools to over 80,000 pupils exclusive of Europe. Our educational work is conducted in three colleges, twenty-three theological seminaries and training schools, and over 2,200 other schools, with a

total enrolment of over 73,000 pupils. The ministry of healing is rendered by fifty-eight medical missionaries, in twenty-seven hospitals and fifty-seven dispensaries. Last year 100,000 patients received medical treatment.

DURING the century our missionaries have translated the Bible, wholly or in part, into more than thirty dialects and languages. Three publication plants on foreign fields help to scatter the good seed, by printing and distributing Bibles, periodicals, hymn books, text-books and other literature.

BUT with all our rejoicing over a century of Baptist progress, we do not forget the noble work of the other denominations, who often in cooperation have helped make possible the accomplishment of much that might otherwise have remained undone. Cooperation is becoming more and more an essential of success on the foreign field. In this connection mention should be made of the great interdenominational University of Nanking; of the educational system at Chengtu, which includes a university, an academy, and several secondary schools, and of the West China Union University in which the Baptists, Friends and Methodists unite; also of the union work with the Presbyterians in Japan. In healing as well, we are working side by side with the Presbyterians in China and in the Philippines, and with the Methodists at Huchow.

A GLORIOUS record we say, and well; but what of the future? What of the unreached millions? How can we enter the open doors? The Foreign Mission Society estimates that fifty new missionary families are needed to keep up the work properly where it has already been established. In Burma several stations

are without resident missionaries. In China and Japan are marvelous opportunities not only for preachers, but for teachers, doctors, men skilled in industrial work, who are capable of blazing new trails in the wilderness.

NOT only men, but equipment and buildings are needed as well. Fifteen churches and chapels, homes for missionaries, teachers' residences for Burma, a dining hall for Rangoon Baptist College, five hospitals, twenty-one other buildings from boys' dormitories to college halls, — these are some of the things that must be forthcoming if the Kingdom is to be advanced. And added to this are other buildings to the number of seventy, — land, sewage systems and electric lighting plants, all totalling about $325,000.

TO provide these things and to advance the light still farther is the work, not of the Society but of the churches, and of the individual members of the churches, who, although they cannot go to the foreign fields themselves, can, by their contributions, reach out hands across the sea to lift the heathen up into the trail of light that leads, like Bethlehem's star, to the feet of the King.

FOR additional literature or any other information regarding the work of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, write to any of the following: —

1. The nearest District Secretary.

2. Department of Missionary Education, 23 East 26th Street, New York City.

3. Literature Department, Box 41, Boston, Mass.

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